

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-49 are all the claims pending in the application.

**Allowable Subject Matter**

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating claims 5-8, 9/5, 11/5-21/5, 30-39 and 40/30-49/30 are allowed. Additionally, Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 11/1, 13/1-16/1, 23/22, 25/22, 26/22, 28/22, 42/22 and 44/22 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. However, Applicants hold such rewriting in abeyance at this time, instead choosing to traverse the prior art rejections as set forth below.

**Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)**

Claims 1-4 and 17/1 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Niyama (JP Pub. 2001-135196). Applicants traverse this rejection for the reasons set forth below.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, an elastic sheet having an outside surface disposed on an inside surface of said cabinet including said opening and across said opening.

In the rejection, the Examiner contends that Niyama's spring member 4(SP) corresponds to the recited elastic sheet. However, Applicants submit because Niyama's spring members 4(SP) fail to meet all the features of claim 1, this rejection is in error.

For instance, Niyama discloses that spring members 4(SP) are formed of a sheet metal material that is conductive. (par. [0013]; *see* Fig. 3). This spring member 4(SP) is part of a

directional slide switch 4. Essentially, the directional slide switch 4 requires a conductive material (sheet metal) to electrically connect electrodes 6a and 6b upon the movement of operating member 3. In order to operate properly, these spring members 4(SP) are located between a side of the case C and the operating member 3. (*see* Fig. 1). Consequently, they are not disposed on an inside surface of case including the opening. Rather, they are disposed between a side of the case, which has no opening, and the operating member 3. No portion of the spring member 4(SP) is disposed on a surface of the case including an opening. Furthermore, the spring member 4(SP) is not disposed across said opening. Therefore, Niyama's spring member 4(SP) fails to meet all the features recited in claim 1.

Thus, Applicants submit claim 1 is allowable for at least this reason. Additionally, claims 2-4 and 17/1 are submitted to be allowable, at least by virtue of their dependency.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)**

Claim 1 is rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ikehara (US 6,400,353).

Applicants traverse this rejection as follows.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, an inputting device, which is disposed in an opening of a cabinet surface, and an elastic sheet having an outside surface disposed on an inside surface of said cabinet including said opening and across said opening.

The Examiner contends that Ikehara's elastic member 15 corresponds to the recited elastic sheet. However, Applicants submit this rejection is in error as the elastic member 15 fails

to meet all the features of claim 1. In particular, claim 1 recites an opening of a cabinet surface. With reference to figure 3, this cabinet surface corresponds to holding member 9. However, because Ikehara's elastic member 15 is not disposed on an inside surface of the holding member 9 which includes said opening, the elastic member 15 does not meet all the features recited in claim 1.

Additionally, the Examiner contends that Ikehara's operating portion 8, coupling pin 15a and operation electrode 10 correspond to the recited sliding key. However, Applicants submit that while the operating portion 8 and the operation electrode 10 are connected and both slide together, this is not true for the coupling pin 15a which does not slide at all. Furthermore, it is not an inherent feature within Ikehara that coupling pin 15a is in contact with the operation electrode 10. (*see* Fig. 3) Rather, coupling pin 15a is engaged with the operation electrode 10 via a center recess. (col. 5, lines 43-50). Contact only occurs between these members when the operating portion 8 is moved from side to side. (*See* Fig. 3, note gap between coupling pin 15a and operation electrode 10). Thus, this coupling pin 15a is not a part of the operating portion 8 and the operating electrode 10, but instead, is a device to return these portions to a center position when a user's finger is removed from the operating portion 8. (*Id.*) Therefore, because Ikehara's coupling pin 15a is not a part of the operating portion 8 and operating electrode 10, these portions are not fixed on the outside surface of an elastic sheet are recited in claim 1.

Thus, Applicants submit claim 1 is allowable for at least those reasons set forth above.

**Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

Claim 19/1 stands rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Niyama.

The Examiner contends that Niyama fails to expressly disclose a nonskid component disposed on the outside surface of the sliding key. To compensate for this deficiency, the Examiner contends that it is well known in the art to include such a nonskid component on an outer surface of an inputting key.

However, because the Examiner's alleged obvious modification of Niyama fails to compensate for the deficiencies of Niyama as applied to claim 1 above, Applicants submit claim 19/1 is allowable, at least by virtue of its dependency.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

Claims 18/1, 20/1, 22, 29, 45/22-49/22 stand rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niyama in view of Takatsuka (US 2004/0080491).

The Examiner contends Niyama fails to expressly teach a concave part formed on the outside surface of the sliding key. To compensate for this deficiency, the Examiner applies Takatsuka. However, because Takatsuka, either taken alone or in combination with Niyama, fails to compensate for the above noted deficiencies of Niyama as applied to claim 1, Applicants submit claims 18/1 and 20/1 are allowable, at least by virtue of their dependency.

Regarding claim 22, because this claim recites features similar to those discussed above with regard to Niyama as applied to claim 1, Applicants submit claim 22 is allowable for the

same reasons set forth above with regard to claim 1. Additionally, Applicants submit claims 29 and 45/22-49/22 are allowable, at least by virtue of their dependency.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

Claims 9/1, 10/9/1, 12/1, 22, 24, 27, 40/22, 41/22 and 43/22 stand rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikehara in view of Takatsuka.

Applicants respectfully submit that because Takatsuka, either taken alone or in combination with Ikehara, fail to compensate for the above noted deficiencies of Ikehara as applied to claim 1 above, claims 9/1, 10/9/1 and 12/1 are allowable, at least by virtue of their dependency.

Further, because claim 22 recites features similar to those discussed above with regard to claim 1, and Takatsuka fails to compensate for those deficiencies, Applicants submit claim 22 is allowable for at least the same reasons set forth above with regard to claim 1. Additionally, Applicants submit claims 24, 27, 40/22, 41/22 and 43/22 are allowable, at least by virtue of their dependency.

**Conclusion**

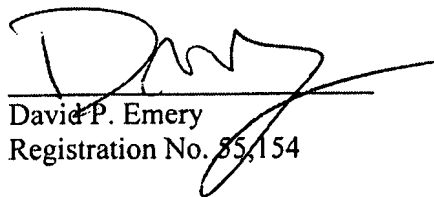
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

**AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111**  
**U.S. Application No.: 10/623,568**

**Attorney Docket No.: Q76655**

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

  
David P. Emery  
Registration No. 85,154

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC  
Telephone: (202) 293-7060  
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

**23373**

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